(d) what is the report of experts' committee for the purchase of Boeing 747?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Government have approved the acquisition of four Boeing 747-400 (passenger version) aircraft at an estimated cost of Rs. 1962.03 crores with a foreign exchange component of US $ 667.09 million. This purchase will be financed from the international capital market.

(b) and (c) The seletcion of engines for the aircraft is still under consideration.

(d) There was no expert committee for the purchase of Boeing 747.

Modernisation of coal mines

*17 SHRIMATI MIRA DAS:
SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in spite of an investment of more than Rs. 1,100 crore in coal mines for modernisation, coal production has not improved in quality after nationalisation of coal mines;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the present ash content has increased as compared to pre-nationalisation level, if so, what is the ash content in coal at present;

(c) how many times coal prices were hiked since the nationalisation of the coal mines;

(d) whether any expert committees have undertaken indepth, study of the problems of the coal mines and suggested remedial measures; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Indian coals generally have high ash content and low calorific value. Better reserves of coal in the country are depleting fast. While there may be difference in the inherent quality of coal from underground and opencast mines, coal from opencast mines is less preferred because of the possibility of the coal getting mixed with some quantities of overburden. The problem of quality, however, generally arises on account of actual supplies not conforming to their stated specifications.

Around 64 per cent of the coal in the country are produced from mechanised opencast mines. With a view to getting quick production more opencast mines are being developed to increase recoverable reserves through this technology.

Since better quality deposits were taken up for mining first and the new mines being opened have lower grades of coal, the ash content of coal have been progressively on the increase. The average ash content of coal being mixed presently varies between 35 percent and 45 percent.

(c) After nationalisation of coal mines, the pit-head prices of coal were revised 9 (nine) times.

(d) and (e) Many Export Committees have made in depth studies of the problems of coal mines and suggested remedial measures. It is not possible to indicate the full details of these comittees and their recomedations here. Some salient details are as follows:

(i) In 1980 an Export Committee headed by Mohd. Fazal, former Member, Planning Commission was appointed by the Ministry of Finance

to identify the steps necessary to improve the performance of Coal India Ltd. (CIL). The committee's report was received in 1981. Out of 31 major recommendations covering number of areas relating to production, despatches, financial management etc., 24 recommendations were accepted in full or with some modifications by the Government.

(ii) In 1985 two Committees—one headed by Shri K.S.R. Chari and another headed by Shri A. N. Banerjee were appointed to make an indepth study of the working of ECL and BCCL respectively. Chari Committee made mainly 99 recommendations/observations covering closure of uneconomic mines, production, productivity, technology, manpower, marketing etc. Most of the recommendations/observations of the Committee were accepted. Banerjee Committee's report contained about 171 major recommendations/observations regarding advance technology for planned exploitation, quality of coking coal, infrastructure development, temporary closure of the heavily losing mines, production, productivity, manpower utilisation of machinery, washeries, Ropeways, fire projects, sand availability and its transportation, budgetary control, internal audit, coal sales, land etc. Most of its recommendations were accepted by the Government.

(iii) More recently, a sub-committee of the Consultative Committee for Ministry of Energy made a study of cost of production and quality control of coal in Coal India Ltd. Another study was conducted by Shri K.S.R. Chari titled issues on coal.

Foreign equity share in power sector

*18. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON- CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to allow cent per cent foreign equity share in power sector as reported in the Business and Political Observer of the 10th August, 1991; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IN DEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b) Amongst many policy proposals regarding private sector participation in power generation, supply and distribution, one under consideration of Government relates to allowing companies with cent per cent foreign equity to participate in power generation, supply and distribution. No decision has been taken in this regard.

Operation of Vayudoot

*19. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 958 given in the Rajya Sabha on 29th July, 1991 and state:

(a) what are the accumulated losses of Vayudoot;

(b) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to merge Vayudoot with Indian Airlines; and

(c) the number of planes presently in operation in Vayudoot?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The accumulated losses of Vayudoot upto 31st March, 91 are estimated to be of the order of Rs. 128 crores.